



EX VERITATE

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TRUTH

GENEVA CLASSICAL ACADEMY

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GENEVA CLASSICAL ACADEMY EXISTS TO
ASSIST FAMILIES IN FULFILLING THEIR
BIBLICAL OBLIGATION TO EDUCATE AND
TRAIN THEIR CHILDREN BY PROVIDING AN
EXTRAORDINARY EDUCATION FOUNDED
UPON A SCRIPTURAL WORLDVIEW,
DISTINCTIVELY CHRISTIAN AND
CLASSICAL, THUS EQUIPPING STUDENTS
TO KNOW, LOVE, AND PRACTICE ALL
THAT REFLECTS TRUTH, GOODNESS,
BEAUTY AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO
LIVE PURPOSEFULLY AND THOUGHTFULLY
IN THE SERVICE OF GOD AND MAN.

A photograph of a building's roofline with a large, dark blue 'Geneva' sign on a white wall. The sign is in a stylized, gothic-like font. The roof is made of reddish-brown tiles. The sky is a pale, overcast blue.

Geneva



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RECOVERING THE AMERICAN MIND

A WORD FROM THE HEADMASTER

America is in trouble and needs recovery, and the crisis begins and ends with the need for truth. I have adapted the title for this article from a book I read last year recommended to me by a Geneva parent and board member, Caleb McDow. The book is titled *The Coddling of the American Mind* by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt. The name, obvious to some, was taken from a more famous tome, *The Closing of the American*

Mind by Allen Bloom. The title "Closing" suggests the loss of rationality; the second, "Coddling," is about the triumph of emotionalism. I want to springboard from both titles to the notions of recovering to indicate Geneva's role in current events in our nation and the role of classical, Christian education right now to heal what ails us through promoting truth.

In the book, the authors assert that the younger generation, called "i-gen" or "Generation Z," people born after 1996 (not Millennials), have been taught and consequently embraced three untruths:

- What doesn't kill you makes you weaker.
- Always trust your feelings.
- Life is a battle between good people and bad people.

The authors assert that these untruths are unhealthy for the individual and society, as depicted in the subtitle: "Good intentions and bad ideas are setting up a generation for failure." Accepting these untruths is why i-gen is so sensitive to the hurtfulness of words, sometimes seeking "safe spaces." The net result is polarization of people's ideology and view of there being only good and bad people. We saw this polarization played out in the

news with protests on college campuses between 2015–2017. Many of those same people have left the college campuses and gone out into the streets, as we have seen most poignantly in this summer's riots. Things have gotten so much worse than when the book was published in 2018.

Heather MacDonald from the Manhattan Institute, assesses the summer of 2020 this way:

“America’s Founders, schooled in a profound philosophical and literary tradition dating back to classical antiquity, understood the fragility of civil peace and the danger of the lustful, vengeful mob. Our present leaders, the products of a politicized and failing education system, seem to know nothing of those truths. Pulling the country back from the abyss will require a recalling of our civilizational inheritance.”

I agree with her assessment: our nation is in trouble! We could be standing on the precipice of our nation’s demise if things don’t change. Of course, racism is wrong, and abuse of power by police officers should be stopped. Unfortunately, peaceful protesting degenerated into violence. The rioting and looting happened across the country while governors, mayors, and police chiefs did little to stop them, and in some cases encouraged them. It started in Minneapolis and spread to other major cities. Mayor Castor in Tampa walked with the protestors who later that evening burned down a gas station, which

was only three blocks from my mother’s house!

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “A riot is the language of the unheard.” Perhaps the converse is also true. People riot when they do not possess another, clearer language with which to communicate. Common language helps bridge the gap between people with differing ideologies.

Classical Christian educator, Andrew Kern of the CiRCE Institute, said on June 2, the day after the major riots:

“What if our national crisis has to do with our failure to teach and learn how to read and to ‘do’ grammar? We have to find the forms that make our thoughts peaceful, which is the purpose of grammar. Grammar teaches forms so that your subjects and your predicates stop arguing with each other, and you bring peace to your mind. You resolve discord. If you can’t do that with your own thoughts, how will you be able to do that in your social duties?”

Words matter! Much of the violence may stem from the division that results from a failure in communication which comes from a failure in education. Let me illustrate. As a society, we no longer know what it means to discriminate. To discriminate means to make distinctions. God does this: He makes a distinction between light and dark, day and night, land and water, men and women, good and evil.

**"People Riot
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Egalitarianism wants no distinctions, and if one is made, it is assumed to be bad. We don’t know the difference between racism and discrimination, or sexism and discrimination. We don’t know the difference between terms like “gender” and “sex”, for that matter. We cannot distinguish between rights and privileges. We don’t know how to discern fact from opinion. What does the term “social justice” mean? How is this different from justice?

If thinking Christians could discern better, they’d know there is a world of difference between “Black lives matter.” and “#BLACKLIVESMATTER”.

Unfortunately, i-gen and much of the American public don’t know that there is a difference or what the difference is. The first is a statement, with a capital letter and a period that makes an assertion about a group of people. Those who make this assertion as a statement feel special compassion is warranted to this group. One can agree with this or not, but the second phrase, with a hash tag (#) and all caps, is a slogan that represents a militant

organization which does not line up with conservative Christianity. On their own website they assert a statement of beliefs which speak against the traditional family and Western Civilization. When these two, the sentence and the phrase, are spoken, they sound the same. When spoken, the hearer needs to follow up with, "Which one do you mean?" But in a mob riot, this conversation is not possible.

When protestors say, "No justice. No peace," what do they mean? Does this mean, "If there is no justice in a nation, the natural result will be a lack of peace"? That would reflect at least a kernel of truth. But if they mean, "If you don't give us the 'justice' we want, we will rob you of peace," that is in essence a threat. Which is the cause, and which is the effect? It matters. Having a common language, with common meanings and understanding, would help to bring us together. Our culture desperately needs people who can think critically, understand nuanced differences, and express those ideas winsomely.

These are the kinds of young men and women that Geneva Classical Academy seeks to produce. I believe the remedy for what ails us as a nation is the Gospel of Jesus Christ; his person and work are at the root of our civility: love of God and love of neighbor. This is how we're going to recover the American mind. I believe Geneva Classical Academy's vision expresses how we can be agents of change,

"GCA exists to assist families in

fulfilling their Biblical obligation to educate and train their children by providing an extraordinary education founded upon a Scriptural worldview, distinctively Christian and classical, thus equipping students to know, love, and practice all that reflects truth, goodness, beauty and encouraging them to live purposefully and thoughtfully in the service of God and man."

I believe with all my heart that Geneva Classical Academy exists "for such a time as this." Our school seeks to teach and learn the important lessons from Scripture that were the bedrock of the founding of our nation. We want to do so much more than teach to the test, as most schools

rather than eliminating all risks. This fits with GCA's rigorous curriculum. Avoid using the word "safe" except for physical safety.

- Don't always trust your feelings. Instead free oneself from mental and emotional distortions that view life as fearful and depressing. This comports with the classical Trivium: the order of grammar, logic, and rhetoric.
- Don't view people as simply good or evil. Rather, take a generous view of people and look for commonality. This flows out of Biblical Christianity that sees everyone as created in God's image and manifests in our

"Our culture desperately needs people who can think critically, understand nuanced differences, and express those ideas winsomely."

goal to be winsome and persuasive.

do, and as partners with families, we will work to pass on our great Christian heritage.

Remember the 3 untruths? The Author's solution to the problem is to practice the opposite of the three untruths, what has been called "conventional wisdom." They propound:

- What doesn't kill you makes you stronger. So encourage young people to seek out challenges and do hard things

The authors conclude the book by saying, "Prepare the child for the road, not the road for the child."

Classical Christian education, as practiced by hundreds of schools like Geneva across the nation, does this by recovering the conventional and Biblical wisdom, and further can help us to recover the American mind and maybe, hopefully and prayerfully, even the American soul.

By Rich Cali, Headmaster

“

DO NOT BE CONFORMED
TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE
TRANSFORMED BY THE
RENEWAL OF YOUR
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YOU MAY DISCERN
WHAT IS THE WILL OF
GOD, WHAT IS GOOD
AND ACCEPTABLE AND
PERFECT.

ROMANS 12:2

MEET GENEVA

Kimberly Rigsby

**What is your educational and professional background?
How long have you been working in development?**

I earned a Master of Public Administration from Walden University and a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Liberty University. I was privileged to work with nonprofits for close to 20 years. My first experience working in a nonprofit was at a local pregnancy center as the Assistant Director. From there I took a position as an Executive Director for another pregnancy center. This gave me the opportunity to assist in creating and promoting legislation to help fund pregnancy centers, which eventually led me into a nonprofit consulting practice for the last seven years. Along with my work for pregnancy centers, I was blessed to work with disaster relief organizations, sustainability projects, faith-based neuroscience and neurotheology movements, and discipleship ministries.

What do you consider your greatest accomplishment in life?

My greatest accomplishment in life is being married to my husband, Marc, for 23 years. We've planted churches and ministries together,

started a business together, relocated across the country together, and are parents to four children (Brazen, Gabriel, Tori, and Xander) who love Jesus.

How would you characterize the climate or culture of the school? How did the Lord prepare you for working at Geneva? How do you incorporate the values that Geneva espouses into your own life and family?

When I visited Geneva in late February to meet Rich and the Board, one of the first things I witnessed and felt on campus was a strong sense of family and community. Geneva is a group of



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people that 'do life' together beyond just Monday – Friday, 8:00am–3:00pm. The Geneva family is always happy to see and help one another.

In addition, I appreciate the importance Geneva places on

education and learning. School at Geneva seems to be a place where knowledge and learning are fervently pursued. Being new to the classical Christian education model, I began to study it, I saw that the Lord had been preparing me for this assignment beginning in middle school and through college. I took Latin in public

school as a child, as well as, Orchestra, and Debate. At the time, I did not have an understanding of how those courses would shape my language skills, provide a rich appreciation and foundation for the arts, teach me to articulate my thoughts, and identify faulty logic. In fact, my husband and I often credit the most valuable part of our college experiences as having taught us how to think critically and teach ourselves just about anything we may need to know in life. It has been our goal as parents to teach our children how to learn and to demonstrate that by being life-long learners ourselves. How refreshing to find a community at Geneva that espouses those same values!

What are your greatest strengths that you bring to the school?

- A love for meeting new people and nurturing relationships.
- A successful background working with and raising funds for faith-based nonprofit organizations.
- A desire to partner with Jesus in raising funds for Geneva.
- A passion for collaboration.

What do you like best about working in Lakeland?

Lakeland reminds me of the town I grew up in in Texas. Lakelanders are friendly and approachable. The city is well kept with pretty parks and lakes in the area. I'm enjoying learning about the rich history of Lakeland and the families that helped to make it the city it is today.

Describe or explain your special approach to development.

Through my service in varying positions with nonprofits, I noticed that funding always seemed to be an issue for organizations, but it's never an issue with God. He is Jehovah Jireh, the one who sees and provides (Genesis 22:14). I asked the Lord to tell me what He thought about raising money, and I began to study the Bible to see what it said about fundraising.

One of the most profound things I learned is that funding God's Kingdom vision really is not about money because God does not need our money. After all, He's the ultimate cattle rancher, owning cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10). It is about relationships and the condition of our hearts (Ezekiel 36:26-28). His desire is to be in relationship with us.

God is looking for hearts that are sensitive to His stirring and will give out of the abundance of their hearts (2 Corinthians 8:12). I began to see in the scriptures that a beautiful thing happened when God moved on people to give and they responded joyfully, the community had everything they needed! When the Israelites set out to build the tabernacle, God provided the materials to build and furnish the tabernacle by moving on the hearts of His people to give (Exodus 35:5, 21). It feels so good to give, and once they got started, they kept bringing offerings each



morning (Exodus 36:3) until they had more than enough to complete the job (Exodus 36:5)! In fact, Moses sent word out for the people to stop bringing gifts because they had more than enough to complete the entire project (Exodus 36:6-7). Can you imagine? Today, we call that exceeding your goal. God's way of fundraising, focusing on people's hearts, equals exceeded goals. In the New Testament, the Macedonian church is spotlighted in 2 Corinthians 8 as being generous givers, yet they were 'very poor' (v.2). Hmm. When God



moved on their hearts and filled them with joy, they gave more than was expected of them (v.5). God's ways of fundraising, focusing on joyful giving, equals no lack. There are more stories in the Bible of great things that happen when God stirs people's hearts and they respond generously. This kind of fundraising was what I wanted to be a part of; seeing God stir our hearts collectively to fund work on earth that advances His Kingdom. From that point forward I began to be intentional about praying for givers, and listening to what God was doing in their life and how/if it fit in to projects and initiatives for

the ministries and organizations I served.

What are you looking forward to?

God has been so faithful to Geneva and has blessed the Geneva family with an amazing campus. It is your giving that makes the Geneva Classical Academy experience special and unique for each student. Generosity takes many forms at Geneva, including selfless and faithful faculty and staff, vibrant volunteers, and generous

financial givers just to name a few.

I am looking forward to hearing your Geneva stories of what God is doing for you and your family. I am looking forward to praying with you and for you.

I am looking forward to my family's Geneva story, as two of our children are enrolled this year.

I am looking forward to being a part of helping to fund a new outdoor gym, a new school library, and a fully equipped science lab.

"I am looking forward to being a part of helping to fund a new outdoor gym, a new school library, and a fully equipped science lab."



MEET GENEVA

Sandra Roth

What is your background? How long have you been in education?

How time flies! I began my journey in Christian education 32 years ago as a kindergarten teacher at a small school on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. In addition to teaching Grammar grades at Christian schools for thirteen years, I taught Upper School classical literature, grammar, and Bible for three years and served as an Assistant Elementary Principal for 2 years.

Next, the Lord opened the door to further my education at Southeastern University where I graduated with a Master of Elementary Education degree in 2009 and was privileged to teach

as a professor in their College of Education for seven years.

Preparing young men and women academically and spiritually to enter the field of education was a blessing beyond words. I taught Introduction to Education, Educational Psychology, Child Development, Field Studies, and Faith Integration. In addition, professor responsibilities included academic advising and mentoring students.

Throughout my educational journey, I also designed and presented convention seminars for teachers and students locally and in other states, including Colorado, Oklahoma, Missouri, and South Carolina.

After retiring from SEU, I continued to volunteer team-teach education classes on campus with my husband, Doug, who has served in multiple capacities in Christian schools throughout the past four decades. Our goal was not just to teach together but also to set an example for our students of a strong, Christ-centered marriage.

Simultaneously during the last 10 years, I focused on teacher development and supervising SEU student interns during their student teaching—all in preparation to serve at Geneva.

What do you like best about living and working in Lakeland?

Lakeland is filled with many

strong, church-going Christian families dedicated to training their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4). In addition, Lakeland is a wonderful place to enjoy beautiful Florida weather and ideal for spending time with grandchildren, family, and friends. Walking trails along lakes, excellent kids' parks, water aerobics, and Explorations V are just a few of my favorite venues and activities. Being close to all the parks in Orlando and Tampa is tops too.

How did the Lord prepare you for working at Geneva? How do you see your role as principal?

Proverbs 16:9 rings true looking back on the miraculous way the Lord prepared me for Geneva. "The heart of a man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." I stand amazed at how the Lord is using teaching and administrative experience over the last 30 plus years for such a time as this.

All my prior Christian schools were founded on a Biblical worldview, phonics-based curriculum, rhyming songs, memorizing, and repetition. Like Geneva, every school was filled with parent, family, and community involvement as an extension of the home. Experience with the Socratic approach, higher-level thinking, and multidisciplinary teaching at various grade levels all prepared me for Geneva's call to provide

an extraordinary Classical and Christian education.

My role as a principal is to come alongside our amazing GCA teachers to equip, strengthen, and encourage them in their gifts to ultimately lead our precious Geneva students to reflect truth, goodness, and beauty. Developing strong parent-student relationships, Christ-centered discipline, and curriculum development are vital to administering the Grammar campus.

Jesus sets an example for us of true education in Luke 2:52, “Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God, and in favor with man.” So, among other responsibilities, I am called daily to foster student growth in the following areas: academically, physically, spiritually, and socially.

What are your greatest strengths that you bring to your students and families?

By God’s grace, all my strengths come from the honor and privilege of walking with the

Lord for the past 40 years. I am reminded of Philippians 3:8-10 and count all my experience in education as loss to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus.

Diligent service, organization, and communication are my greatest practical strengths—all vital to the role of principal and GCA family member.

Another strength is my marriage of 38 years. My husband and I have been a team in education, first and foremost with our own children. The Lord faithfully carried us through extremely difficult times with the loss of two of our children (Michael at birth with Trisomy 9 and Ezekiel born severely brain damaged, requiring round-the-clock care). Zeke lived close to three years while doctors expected him to live, at most, two months. We faithfully taught him the Word of God even though he was unable to communicate back to us. Zeke taught us patience and endurance, which I hope to extend to the students and families of GCA.

Finally, grandparenting is a source of strength as a Grammar principal and adds new wisdom in navigating through parent relationships, understanding students, and discipling families. Just plain loving children and the pure joy they bring is a golden source of strength. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for creating children to be wonderful in every way!



How do you apply the ideals that you disciple in the students to your own life?

One of the biggest ideals we disciple in our students at Geneva is shepherding hearts. In the words of Aristotle, “Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.” Yet, how can I help shepherd the precious hearts of our students here at GCA unless I first allow Jesus as my Lord and Savior to shepherd my heart? The Holy Spirit reminds me daily of His grace in my life, making it easy to extend that same grace to others.

Paramount is prayer. John 15:5 reminds us, “Apart from Him, we can do nothing.” Because we desire our students to grow in relationship with Christ, we as faculty, staff, and administration pray individually and corporately for our students and families alike. Geneva is a team, a family, and we rely on the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our steps.



"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

-John 15:5

What do you consider your greatest accomplishment in your life?

Without a doubt, no accomplishments exist apart from God's grace and providence.

Every door the Lord has opened for me to share the Gospel has been an accomplishment worth noting. Witnessing to family members and seeing the Lord change their lives has been a highlight of my life. Even though 2,000 miles separate us from extended family, we remain as close-knit as ever.

My relationship with Christ, marriage, son Micah, daughter-in-law Irina, grandchildren Damian and Zoe, and the many students who still call me "Mama Roth" are lasting accomplishments that never fade.



Commencement *2020*

Commencement Speech by Gabriella Garas

I think 2020 caught us all by surprise, from a global health crisis to humanitarian crises, even my parent's crisis when they realized that my graduation makes them old-2020 seemed to bring waves of bad news and fear. Despite it all, we rely on God's mercy and rediscover the beauty of forgotten activities like the family bike ride and the dinner table. Also, the fact that you see so many curly-headed people, still alive, in the second row proves that God does give huge amounts of patience if you ask Him!

It means so much to Jacqueline and me that you are here tonight. It has taken a lot of love and passionate lectures to prepare us to walk boldly off of this stage and into our futures, and still, we will go, undeterred by the confusion we will encounter.



Photos by Drew Blaser
@DrewBlaserPhotography

Commencement 2020

Jacqueline and I have had a rivalry about who would win valedictorian for years- and I thought she had underlined my victory when she signed my tenth-grade yearbook “valedictorian” and spelled it incorrectly. Jacqueline, I have loved doing life with you these last four years, laughing with you about silly things we’ve done, and learning from you.

Mrs. Maravilla, thank you for your kindness and generosity- you always made yourself approachable. You put thought into every one of us, never forgetting a birthday, and never missing an opportunity to be a blessing.

Mr. Smith, and Mr. Strawbridge the lesser, thank you for never missing an opportunity to make fun of me.

Mr. Fullgraf, thank you for never missing an opportunity to be gracious in your responses to my music and art, even when it was something you didn’t like!

Coach Smith, thank you for never missing an opportunity to emphasize how white you really are! But jokes aside, thank you for the time and heart you put into my senior thesis.

Mr. Strawbridge, thank you for your passion to be used by God, and for never missing an opportunity to give a life lesson.

When I was asked to welcome you tonight, I reflected on our unusual

year. Standing here feels a bit like coming back, just to say goodbye.

However, in His Kingdom, there are no goodbyes. So rather than say goodbye, I’ll say salaym alaykum.




Photos by Drew Blaser

 @DrewBlaserPhotography

Commencement 2020



Photos by Drew Blaser

 @DrewBlaserPhotography



The Grace of Giving

by Kimberly Rigsby

The gym/fieldhouse radiates school spirit and a sense that together we can accomplish anything! It is the hub for after-school activities, practices, and a gathering place. Many of us learned valuable life skills in the gym – teamwork, leadership, perseverance.

Do you remember the pride of walking into your alma mater's gym, seeing the banners, achievements, and awards hung on the side or from the ceiling? What about hearing the clapping and chanting as the team scored – did you participate in doing the 'wave' through the bleachers?

Since acquiring our new campus in 2018, it has

been our collective goal to build an outdoor gym/fieldhouse – and we are only about \$50,000 away from realizing this goal!

This holiday season, the Geneva Team (Board, Administration, and Faculty) is on a bold mission to fully-fund the gym/fieldhouse and has pledged to match up to \$10,000 of every gift given in December.

No doubt, you have shared some of your school experiences with your children – give that gift to your children this holiday season by giving generously to see Geneva's Outdoor Gym/Fieldhouse become a reality!

MAKE A DONATION AT GENEVAClassicalAcademy.com/GIVING

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The Grace of Giving

TESTIMONIALS

"The current Gym that we have is very hard to practice in because nothing is regulation. The ceilings are low and it's very closed in. The nets are a lot lower than they should be. When we have to go play games, it's hard for us to transition from non regulation to regulation gyms."

***Natalie McMicken,
Varsity Volleyball Player***



"As a coach, I want a safe and functional place for my athletes to practice and play. They all work very hard all season, so having a facility to call their own would give them the equipment and the space that they need to refine their skills."

***-Rebecca Fielder,
Junior Varsity Volleyball Coach***

THANKS TO OUR DONORS

Thanks-For-Giving

Your giving makes the Geneva Classical Academy experience special and unique for each student.

Over the last year, your donations helped to improve the Geneva campus and create comfortable and engaging learning environments for Geneva students to thrive. Your gifts:



Completed the renovation of the fine arts wing for our music and theatre arts program.



Completed the gym renovation.



Installed security fencing to direct the flow on/off campus and keep our student body safe.

Walk-A-Thon 2020

Through our annual Walk-A-Thon fundraiser, our students exceeded our goal of \$25,000 by bringing in over \$33,000!





SCHEDULE A TOUR!

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